

November 24, 1958

Dr. Ray Owen
Biology Laboratories
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, California

Dear Ray:

As you know I am moving out to Stanford at the end of this semester to start organizing a Department of Genetics. While this will be in the Medical School its teaching obligations are minimal and the Department is intended to be in effect a basic research institute. The Medical School context will influence our orientation only in the direction I would have had in mind anyhow, that is to a concentration of interest in biochemical, immunological, and somatic-cellular problems.

I am writing to ask your advise about possible candidates for appointments in this Department. I am particularly interested to find a teammate in the general area of transplantation genetics. We would be less interested in mammalian genetics per se and mainly in those aspects which bear on the utility of a departmental program in which microbial genetics will also play a significant role. I may have consulted you about this before and if so I would like to ask you again if you have any more recent thoughts in this connection.

I would also wonder whether you would consider yourself available for such a position. Unfortunately I am at the moment by no means confident that, together with other commitments, we could underwrite a position that would be attractive to as mature and experienced an investigator as yourself but with the understanding that this would be entirely tentative I would invite your comments as to what you might consider the basic prerequisites of a position for yourself. As matters stand now, and I hope you will consider this with appropriate confidence, we have the following general plan. Gus Nossal is coming in September as a visiting research associate to continue for a period of two years the program on mechanism of antibody formation we had started together. I have invited Leonard Hertzzenberg who is now a fellow in Harry Eagle's department to consider a junior position which would involve establishing a program in tissue culture genetics. There is some faint hope of recruiting Cavalli to come at least on a temporary basis for a niche in human genetics. (This post is the hardest to fill since it would seem necessary to have a vigorous representation of human genetics for liaison with the clinical departments but we also need a physiologically oriented man for him to be of some particular interest to the rest of us). I am not particularly hopeful that Cavalli will emigrate on a durable basis but this is for the future to decide.

And then finally we should have an appointment in mammalian genetics along the lines indicated.

In addition there are of course any number of people in biology and in biochemistry who are actively engaged in genetical work. Plans are afoot also for new programs in the clinical departments, probably Pediatrics, for active representation of genetics there. I am sure, too, that you are acquainted with Henry Kaplan's interests in transplantation.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

JL/jp